Recounting Untold History

Darul Uloom Deoband

a heroic struggle against the British tyranny

M. Burhanuddin Qasmi



Markazul Ma'arif
Mumbai

Markazul Ma'arif
Education & Research Centre
246, Nagdevi Street,
Mumbai - 400 003. (India)
manager@markazulmaarif.org

Recounting Untold History

Darul Uloom Deoband

a heroic struggle against the British tyranny

M. Burhanuddin Qasmi

Publisher
MARKAZUL MA'ARIF, INDIA
.Mumbai - 400 003 (India)

MMERC 's Series on Islam No. 30

First Edition: July 2001

Distributed by:

Markazul Ma'arif Education & Research Centre (MMERC)
246 Nagdevi Street, Mumbai - 400003 (India)
Tel : 022 3431786 / 3440511
Email : manager@markazulmaarif.org
Web site : www.markazulmaarif.org

Price : Rs 20/-

Composed at MMERC by Naseem Ahmad Qasmi and

Designed & Printed at SAN GRAPHICS, Tel. : 840 3118

DEDICATED WITH SALUTATION

To

The Ulama and Freedom Fighters
who were hanged by the trees
at the bank of river Yamuna

&

Darul Uloom Deoband, (U.P)

the seat of my learning that trains youth for the noble cause.

PUBLISHER NOTE

Even though people all over the globe have begun taking interest in understanding Islam, it still remains the most misunderstood religion. As far as the understanding of Islam among non-Muslims is concerned, we may divide them in two broad categories. The first category is of those who are ill educated, have never studied the religion seriously and whatever knowledge they have acquired about Islam is either from people who themselves have no knowledge of the religion or through non-serious, cheap books and biased newspaper's articles. The other category is of those who have studied the religion well and understood it as well. However, their study of Islam is with a definite purpose - in most cases to find out faults with it or to malign it. If we can make a third category from the above two, of those who sincerely strive to study and understand Islam and are in search of true path and true religion, people falling in this category not only accept Islam as the religion for whole humanity but in most cases they revert to Islam.

Lately, there has been attempt to portray Islam a religion at loggerhead with other faiths and belief. People behind this conscious attempt have divided Islam into so-called 'fundamentalist' and 'Sufi' Islam. Sufi Islam, in their view, is the religion to be appreciated where as fundamentalist Islam is to be condemned and challenged. But any serious researcher of the religion would find that Islam is the name of peaceful submission to the Almighty Allah, the Creator of the Universe, and preaches peace. Its basic motto is to make a man live at peace with himself and let other live in peace.

Islam exhorts its followers to purify themselves and the society they live in from all sorts of social evils because if not done, it would disturb the peace of mind of all its inhabitants. Islam also teaches not to subjugate the free will of the people and it exhorts its followers not to submit to oppressive and evil forces. And it was this teaching of Islam that inspired Ulama of India to wage relentless war against the British rule.

However, there are so-called intellectuals who won't only ignore Ulama's contributions to India's independence, but intentionally malign Muslim scholars and their educational institutions

branding them anti national. The following statements of a British Army general, Tomson, quoted in the booklet should be an eye opener for those who couldn't see the selfishness and real motive of some so-called thinkers and writers. The British army general, who fought against Muslims in the uprising of 1857, wrote in his memoir: *"If to fight for one's country, plan and mastermind wars against occupying mighty powers are patriotism, then undoubtedly maulvis (read Ulama hanged by the British rulers) were the loyal patriots to their country and their succeeding generations will remember them as heroes."*

The booklet in hand is an attempt by M. Burhanuddin Qasmi to show how colonial tendencies remain antagonistic to people who are not ready to accept the slavery of another human being. What sort of sacrifices Indian Muslims, in general, and Ulama, in particular, had to make for the liberation of this country. And that Indian nation has not only forgotten the sacrifices of those Muslim martyrs who laid down their lives fighting gallantly for the Independence of this country, but also some short sighted and vested interest writers are busy overtime maligning the institutions founded by them as "den of anti national activities".

I hope & pray that this booklet would lead its readers to an indepth study of history that depicts events in its true colour.

Wassalam

(MAULANA) BADRUDDIN AJMAL AL-QASMI
President : MARKAZUL MA'ARIF, INDIA

PREFACE

The booklet is only a glimpse of the exemplary contributions and heroic struggle of Muslim Ulama in the freedom movement of India. It is simply an attempt at removing the cobweb from the valuable parts of Indian history - specially those parts that have suffered due to the prejudice, hatred and hypocrisy of our so-called intellectuals and historians.

I had to go through various history books, to quote from reliable and authentic sources, in order to answer emails with questions pertaining to a book entitled 'World of Fatwas', written by an Indian journalist, casting aspersions on patriotic spirits of Darul Uloom Deoband. Here on, the article is given the shape of a booklet, hoping this would benefit the serious students of history. If it entices the general readers to know more about the sacrifices of Ulama in India's freedom struggle and leads the interested readers of history to an unbiased in-depth research, the purpose of my writing is served.

I am thankful for the co-operation offered by Brother Hasan Imam and Mufti Obaidullah Qasmi in making it more attractive for the common readers.

Wassalam

(M. Burhanuddin Qasmi)
Date : June 20, 2001

Chapter (I)

SHAH WALIULLAH AND HIS MISSION

Darul Uloom Deoband **is not only an educational institution of international fame, but it is also inheritor of a rich legacy dating back to the early 18th century. The untold history narrated hereunder is of the period when** ***Shah Waliullah Dehlavi*** **(1703-1762) led a revolution to change the whole system by drawing attention of the people towards degradation of European imperialism and rampant corruption among oriental rulers. During his pilgrimage to** ***Makkah*** **in 1731,** ***Shah Waliullah*** **was inspired by a vision to replace the imperialist and co rrupt administration by establishing a government based on principles of equality and justice.** [1]

Shah Waliullah **had seen the decline of** ***Mughal*** **rule in India and observed similar degeneration in other countries of Asia and Africa. The last revered and powerful ruler of** ***Mughal*** **dynasty** ***Aurangzeb*** **had already passed away (1707) and East India Company had assumed power to rule a part of Eastern India, defeating** ***Sirajud Dawla*** **at** ***Palasi*** **in 1757. Ultimately** ***Shah Waliullah*** **came to the conclusion that monarchist and imperialist tendencies were the main cause for worsening state affairs. He formulated certain principles, necessary**

---

(1) Hujjatullahil Baligha

for the revival of human values. In his book ' *Hujjatullahil Baligha'* he laid down those prin ciples i.e. "labour is the real source of wealth" and "only those who put in the physical and mental labour for the sake of betterment of the society, deserve to possess wealth." People, he believed, are equal and the position of the ruler of a State is no more than that of a common citizen in matter of justice and freedom. Things like right to freedom, security and property is essential for all, irrespective of religion, race or colour.

It is to be noted that he propagated these ideas long before the French, American or Soviet revolutions took place. It is a pity that even today these noble ideas lie buried under the trash of imperialist history that was mainly written to tarnish the image of Muslims and Ulama in India. It could be termed as nothing but the tragedy of this nation that a stalwart like *Shah Waliullah Dehlavi* is deprived of a place in the modern history syllabus of schools and colleges.

MARTYRDOM OF TIPU SULTAN

During the period from 1831 to 1915, Ulama, the true heirs of *Shah Waliullah's* legacy, fought organized battles against the mighty British for the freedom of this country. On 4th May, 1799 *Tipu Sultan* was martyred in the battle of *Srirangapatnam*. On seeing his dead body *Lord*

Harris gloated: "Now India is ours." [2]

Tipu Sultan's martyrdom has been a source of inspiration for the Ulama who fought tooth and nail against imperialist designs in India. They, however, later took a realistic view of the situation and came to conclusion that after *Tipu Sultan's* death there was no ruler who could challenge the British power. Later on history proved that the British occupied the whole of India in a short span of time after *Tipu Sultan* was martyred.

FIRST EDICT AGAINST THE BRITISH RULE IN INDIA

In 1803, the British captured Delhi and set up the rule of the East India Company, declaring **'people belong to God, country to the King and administration to the Company Bahadur'**. [3]

The common talk in Delhi at that time was **"the writ of Shah Alam does not run beyond Palam".** At that time *Shah Abdul Aziz Dehlavi*, the son of *Shah Waliullah Dehlavi*, issued the first edict (*Fatwa*) against the British rule that proclaimed **"Our country has been enslaved. To struggle for independence and put an end to the slavery is our duty".** [4]

---

(2) Biography of Tipu Sultan p. 343.

(3) Ulama-e-Hind ka Shandar Mazi 2/78.

(4) Abstract from : Fatawa Azizia p. 17.

With this proclamation of *Shah Abdul Aziz Dehlavi*, the long drawn (1803-1947) India's freedom struggle began.

SYED AHMAD SHAHEED

Ulama under the leadership of Syed Ahmad (1786-1831), the great martyr of Rai Bareli, took the task of executing the edict of Shah Abdul Aziz. The armed struggle against the British occupation started in 1808, when Maharaja Jaswant Rao and Nawab Amir Ali Khan jointly planned to fight against the British forces. Shah Abdul Aziz ordered his disciple Syed Ahamd Shaheed to merge his army with that of Amir Ali Khan. Syed Ahmad Shaheed fought jointly for six years before he came to know that Amir Ali Khan was contemplating to enter in to a pact with the British. [5]

He left Amir Ali Khan and from the year 1818 to 1821 he toured the country to propagate and instill the spirit of independence in the masses. In 1824, he set up his base in the Frontier and began the struggle. Nucleus of freedom fighters met on January 10, 1827 and set up a provisional Government of Free India under the leadership of Syed Ahmad Shaheed. [6]

(5) Ulama-e-Hind Ka Shandar Mazi 88/2.

(6) Biography of Syed Ahmad Shaheed,
Ulama-e-Hind ka Shandar Mazi 190-192/2.

In a tyrannical system, as the condition existed in those days, this was the first ever bold and courageous move by a representative body to denounce openly the British rule in India.

The leaders of the freedom struggle, Maulana Syed Ahmad and Maulana Muhammad Ismail, were martyred in the battle of *Balakot* along with 300 *comrade de guerre* fighting against an ally of the British imperialism.[7]

Even after this setback, companions of these great martyrs carried on the struggle for nearly half a century. Ulama of *Sadiqpu*r continued their relentless struggle and went on fighting in the Frontier region for more than two decades between the year 1845 and 1871.

THE HISTORIC REVOLT OF 1857 WAS LED BY THE ULAMA

Muslim freedom fighters kept on fostering anti imperialism revolt all over the country. In 1857 another edict for *Jihad* (call for war as religious obligation for Muslims) was issued. The edict carried the signature of 34 Ulama. Prominent among them were Maulana Qasim Nanautavi, the founder of Darul Uloom Deoband, Maulana Rasheed Ahmad Gangohi and Hafiz Zamin Shaheed who fought the British army under the

---

(7) Ulama-e-Hind ka Shandar Mazi 223.2.

leadership of Haji Imdadullah at Shamli field (Saharanpur, UP). [8]

The revolt of 1857 [mentioned in the British history as Mutiny (Ghadar) of 1857] failed. Ulama, thereafter, became the main target of the British oppression and persecution. The word '*Maulvi'* was synonymous to '*rebel*' in the British eyes. Out of 200,000 people martyred during the revolt, more than 51,200 were Ulama. *Edward Timus* admitted that in Delhi alone 500 Ulama were hanged to death.

There were five major sedition cases against the Ulama during the period 1864 and 1871. The sedition cases were generally known as **'the Wahabi Cases'** or the **'Ambala Conspiracy Case'**. In all these cases the accused were either sentenced to death or to life imprisonment. *Tomson*, a British army general who fought against Muslims in the 1857 revolt, wrote in his memoir (*Rebellion Clerics:P-49):*

"If to fight for one's country, plan and mastermind wars against occupying mighty powers are patriotism, then undoubtedly maulvis (read Ulama) were the loyal patriots to their country and their succeeding generations will remember them as heroes". [9]

---

(8) Abstract from : History of Darul Uloom Deoband.

(9) Ulama-e-Hind Ka Shandar Mazi 433.

Alas! The succeeding generations have reduced their heroes to non-entities zero. The torchbearers and heir apparent of the great legacy of India's freedom struggle, *'Maulvis'* are today branded with the title of 'foreign agents'. Home Ministry, media and intelligence agencies of this country project the institutions run by '*Maulvis'* as terrorists' den.

Chapter (II)

BIRTH OF DARUL ULOOM DEOBAND

After the defeat of *Shamli, Delhi,* and in various other battlefields during and after 1857, the prominent leaders of the freedom movement found it very hard to save India from the cultural onslaught of the British. To counter the nefarious British plan to enslave India culturally, they planned to establish a revolutionary institution that would impart knowledge as well as enthuse fervour among students to fight against oppressive forces. Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanautavi (1833-1879), the founder of '*Darul Uloom'* (house of learning) at Deoband, later on outlined the purpose of establishing the institution in the following words :

"The English have perpetrated boundless acts of tyranny against the Muslims for their fault, if at all it was a fault, of the uprising in 1857 and their relentless endeavour for the independence of this country thereafter. They have left no stone unturned to plunder and obliterate the Islamic arts and science, Muslim culture and civilization. Endowments of Muslim educational institutions have been confiscated and as a result state funded schools have been virtually closed. It is

therefore, necessary to adopt other method instead of relying upon the old system of endowments.” [10]

AIMS & OBJECTIVES OF DARUL ULOOM

Maulana Mohammad Qasim Nanautavi was the guiding force behind this educational movement. He rendered glorious and invaluable services to the people of the sub-continent in academic, *Dawah*, political and social fields. In 8-point resolution, which he proposed for the newly founded *Darul Uloom,* he emphasized on the need of public contribution and donation in contravention to the prevailing system of endowment from the State that was prevalent ever since the Muslim rule. This was basicall y to keep the institution free from the government influence.[11]

To explain briefly the aims and objectives of *Darul Uloom*, one may quote what Qari Muhammad Taiyeb Qasmi , former Vice Chancellor, has said in this regard:

Religiosity (in individual and social life)

---

(10) History of Darul Uloom Deoband 1/113-114.
(11) History of Darul Uloom Deoband 1/116.

Conduct (Morality)

Academic and Educational Excellence.[12]

INAUGURAL CEREMONY OF DARUL ULOOM

The year 1866 was the auspicious year for Muslims of the sub-continent in particular and Muslims of the world in general. It was in this year that the renaissance of their religious, educational, political and cultural life began. It all began from an old and historic habitat. In the open courtyard of the old *Chattah Mosque* in Deoband; in utter simplicity, without any customary fanfare and under the shadow of a small pomegranate tree (which is still alive), the inaugural function of *Darul Uloom* took place on Thursday *15th Muharram 1283 A.H.* corresponding to 30th May 1866. Mullah Mahmood Deobandi, a ranking divine, highly qualified and trained, was appointed as a teacher for the first time. The caravan began with a lone teacher Mullah Mahmood Deobandi and his first disciple Mahmoodul Hasan. It was strange historic co-incidence that the name of both the teacher and the taught was 'Mahmood' (the praised one). The same student later on became *Shaikhul Hind* and the great hero of *Reshmi Rumal* movement. And the institution, *Darul Uloom Deoband*, to which the great teacher Mullah Mahmood Deobandi nursed with all sincerity and

---

(12) History of Darul Uloom Deoband 1/109-110.

dedication has not only become famous throughout the world, but it is also known today as *'Azhar-e Hind'* (Azhar University of India) and *'Maadr-e Elmi'* (the mother of all religious institutions in East Asia).

A SHINING STAR IN THE EASTERN HORIZON

Though the inaugural function was unimpressive, very brief, unceremonious and unpublicized, it was in fact the incipient of a new era - an era of cultural, educational and religious movement to safe-guard the Muslim interest in India.

It was a well thought out and fully deliberated mission. It was also carried out with full spirit, understanding and dedication as is evident from the foray it made in the fields of education and the glorious task it performed in shaping the individual's life. The pious founders of *Darul Uloom* kindled a torch that spread the light of Allah's Book, a basic and essential ingredient for the preservation of socio-cultural life of *Ummah* in the sub-continent. Through Islamic teaching i.e. *commentary on the Quran, the Prophet's saying and the law,* they built strong and invincible citadels in many hearts that couldn't be conquered by any means.

Darul Uloom Deoband not only played a very important role in saving Muslims from educational,

spiritual and political abyss and discomfiture, but also produced tens of thousands of educated and well-trained freedom fighters who struggled and laid their lives for the sake of the liberation of this great nation. [13]

These valiant sons of the soil destroyed the British dream for ruling over the golden bird (India). Post independence historians may forget to mention their achievements; ideological obscurantist and present day politicians may not like to mention their names while celebrating the silver or golden jubilee of India's freedom struggle, but ordinary people of this country salute them and adore them for their valiant deeds and will continue doing so whenever and wherever the story of freedom struggle is recounted.

---

(13) History of Darul Uloom Deoband 1/117.

Chapter (iii)

CONTRIBUTIONS OF DARUL ULOOM DEOBAND IN THE FREEDOM OF INDIA

After completion of his study, in 1877, *Shaikhul Hind* Maulana Mahmoodul Hasan, the first student of Darul Uloom Deoband, set up an organisation called ***'Samaratut Tarbiyat'*** (results of the training).[14]

The aim of the organization was to prepare for armed insurrection against the British. The movement continued for at least 30 years before it was stopped. The main reason for abandoning the movement was the demise of its patron, Maulana Mohammad Qasmi Nanautavi (in 1880) and the lacunas in organizational set up which appeared to be an obstacle for the desired goal.[15]

In 1909, Shaikhul Hind Maulana Mahmoodul Hasan re-organized his Fidayeen (devotees) under the banner of 'Jamiatul Ansaar'. Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi had been called to Deoband to take charge of secretariat of this new organization .[16]

The first ever introduction of Jamiatul Ansar was made at the auspicious annual function of Darul Uloom Deoband in 1911. Before 30 thousand distinguished

---

(14) Tahreek-e-Shaikul Hind 61.

(15) Aseeran-e-Malta 23.

(16) Personal Diary of Obaidullah Sindhi 20.

Ulama from around the country and out side, the Jamiat declared its aims and objectives and the reason as to why it was necessary to struggle for the freedom of the country. Buoyed by the successful launching and the support that it elicited from the masses, Jamiatul Ansaar organized its first mass meeting at Muradabad town in April 1911. Participants from Aligarh, Nadwatul Ulama Lucknow and Deoband gathered in large numbers. In 1912 and 1913 the Jamiat organized mass gathering and successful public agitation in which thousands of people from Meerut and Shimla took active part. The huge support exhibited by Jamiat unnerved the government and they began planning to root out the main source - Darul Uloom Deoband, from where such a powerful organization had sprung. The leading members were asked by Shaikhul Hind to give up their membership of Jamiat in order to save the educational institution from irreparable losses that it might suffer at the hands of colonial rulers. [17]

---

(17) Ulama-e-Haque 1/131, Yad-e-Baiza 107, Muqaam-e-Mahmood 203-204 and Naqash-e-Hayat 2/144.

A NEW ESTABLISHMENT SPRINGS UP IN DELHI

Those freedom seekers who resigned from *Jamiatul Ansar* to save *Darul Uloom* were not going to sit quiet watching helplessly. Soon after the ban of *Jamiat* in 1913, they appeared in Delhi with a new name ***'Nazzaaratul Ma'arif'.*** Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi and *Shaikhul Hind* were the leading figures behind this new setup. The zeal, spirit and purpose of the new set up was nothing but freedom from the British rule.. However, a few changes were made in organizational set up to conceal the real mission from Government agencies.

Mujahideen used the organization as a corridor to reach Delhi. It was also used as a public relation and financial resource base. Maulana Muhammad Ali Jauhar, Maulana Abul Kalaam Azaad, Maulana Sindhi and Shaikhul Hind used to meet here secretly. [18]

When the First World War (1914) began between Germany and Britain, the freedom fighters once again changed their action plan. They decreased domestic activities and fully concentrated on supporting Germany. [19]

---

(18) Aseeran-e-Malta 27 and Ulama-e-Haque 1/136.

(19) Naqash-e-Hayaat 2/210.

SHAIKHUL HIND VISITS HIJAZ - MAKKAH

Fidayeen-e-Freedom saw the war as a golden opportunity to strike at the roots of the British interest. Armed insurrections were planned against the British forces. Haji Saheb Tarang Zaie and Maulana Saifur Rahman Kabulie from *Shaikhul Hind's* Volunteer Group were selected as field commanders with operational base at *Zaigi* in *Bajore*, the capital of tribal autonomous *Yaghistan*. [20]

Shaikhul Hind Maulana Mahmoodul Hasan dispatched his deputy, Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi, to *Kabul* and he himself left for *Makkah*. The main purpose of the visit was to solicit men and material support from the Muslim countries because without weaponry and their active support it was quite impossible to achieve the goal.

Shaikhul Hind reached *Makkah* on October 9, 1915 and met the Turkish Governor, *Ghalib Pasha*. On his request the powerful Governor of the *Usmani Caliphate* agreed to extend support against the British government. In order to publicize his support among Muslims of the sub-continent, he wrote a long letter exhorting the general public to continue with their struggle, assuring them of his government's open support in the future.

---

(20) Al-Jamiat, Sunday edition January 6, 1985.

It was before the United States had taken sides with any of the warring parties. Later when the US government sided with the allied forces - Russia, France and Britain - the whole war scenario changed. Turk and German alliance was defeated. As a consequence of the defeat at the hands of allied forces with full support of the United States of America, the *Usmani Caliphate* was destroyed. The dream of *Shaikhul Hind* and his lieutenants to drive away the colonialists, by waging war against them on Indian soil, never materialized. [21]

FORMATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA IN EXILE

As mentioned earlier, Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi was sent to *Kabul* for a special mission. He established a Government in exile there, with Maulana Barkatullah Bhopali and himself as Ministers and Maharaja Pratap Singh as the President. Formation of ***'Lashkar - e - Najat Dehinda'*** (Liberation Army) with its headquarter in *Madinah* and *Shaikhul Hind* Maulana Mahmoodul Hasan as its Chief was declared.

Meanwhile, an international set up by the name of **'Junoodur Rabbaniyah'** (Army of God) was formed.

---

(21) Aseeran-e-Malta 34, Naqash-e-Hayaat 2/212, 186-87 and Tahreek-e-Shaikhul Hind 72.

The purpose of this group was to represent the movement around the world in order to garner international support against the colonial rule. *Shaikhul Hind* was named *Al-Qayed* (the Leader) of this group too. [22]

Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi sent a letter to *Shaikhul Hind* Maulana Mahmoodul Hasan, in *Makkah*, with details of his activities in Kabul and the future plan. The letter was written on a piece of cloth made of silk. Maulana Mohammad Mian Mansoor Ansari, one of the leading lights of *Shaikhul Hind's* movement and grandson of Maulana Qasim Nanautavi, also enclosed a long letter detailing office bearer's name of the Government in Exile and *Junoodur Rabbaniyah* action plan in the future. These letters were dispatched to *Madinah* through Shaikh Abdur Raheem Sindhi. However, on its way to *Madinah* these letters reached the hands of a neo-Muslim named *'Rab Nawaz'*. The same was passed to the British Commissioner in Multan. The date inscribed on the Silk letter was 8/9 *Ramdhanul Mubarak 1334 A.H.,* corresponding to 9/10 July 1916, which reached the hands of the Commissioner in the first week of August 1916. How such a grievous blunder occurred, no one could explain. [23]

---

(22) Tahreek-e-Shaikhul Hind 281, 282 & 271.

(23) Naqash-e-Hayaat 2/213, Thareek-e-Shaikhul Hind 268-269.

TAHREEK-E-RESHMI RUMAAL

As a consequence of the disclosure of **’Silk Letter Conspiracy’** or ’*Tahreek-e-Reshmi Rumaal*’ of 1916 against the British Empire, 222 pioneering Ulama from all over the country were arrested.[24]

Prominent leaders of this movement were *Shaikhul Hind* Maulana Mahmoodul Hasan, Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi, Maulana Abul Kalam Azaad and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan.

Shaikhul Hind and his comrades Maulana Waheed Ahamad Faizabadi, Maulana Azeez Gul, Hakim Syeed Nusrat Hussain and Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madni were arrested in *Hijaz (Makkah)* on *23 Safar, 1335 A.H.* They were sent to *Malta* via *Cairo* by a ship on *29 Rabius Sani 1335 A.H.* corresponding to 21 February 1917 and clamped in the prison for 3 years and 4 months. They were released and reached Bombay on June 8, 1920. However, Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi and Maulana Mohd. Mian Mansoor Ansari had to remain in exile for several years.[25]

---

(24) Muqaam-e-Mahmood 297-298.

(25) Abstract : Safar Nama-e Malta 118-127, Aseeran-e-Malta 51 and Naqash-e-Hayaat 2/135.

JAMIAT ULAMA-E-HIND

The Indian National Congress was formed in 1885, with a view to persuade Muslims to participate in the struggle for freedom. More than 300 Ulama issued a decree (*Fatwa*) which was repeatedly published in the newspaper called ***'Nusratul-Abrar'.*** Maulana Abul Kalam Azad launched the weekly ***'Al-Hilal'****,* a heralder of freedom struggle. After World War II, most of the freedom fighters eschewed the path of armed struggle. They adopted non-violence as a means of freedom struggle. The same Ulama, in March 1919, set up an organisation called ***'Jamiat Ulama-e-Hind'.*** Mufti Kifayatullah was elected as its first President. Mufti Kifayatullah, in 1917, criticized the 'Lucknow Pact' between Congress and Muslim League and put forth the demand for 'self-rule'. The statement coincided with the arrival of *Lord Montague* as the Secretary of State for India.

The '*Khilafat Conference'* was held under the presidency of Maulana Fazle Haq in Delhi on Nov. 13, 1919. Mufti Kifayatullah moved a resolution at the conference to boycott the 'Victory Celebration' of the British Government. The resolution had the support of Seth Chutani and Mahatma Gandhi. Subsequently Mufti Kifayatullah issued a *Fatwa*, signed and endorsed by 20 Ulama, declaring participation in the victory celebration

of the British government as impermissible for the Muslims - as long as the settlement with the rulers of defeated Ottoman Empire was not in accordance with the Islamic law and the popular sentiments of the Muslims. [26]

FATWA IN FAVOUR OF NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT

The first conference of the *Jamiat* was held at *Amritsar* on December 28, 1919 under the presidency of Maulana Abdul Bari of Firangi Mahal. The Conference expressed its anxiety and protested over the non-release of *Shaikhul Hind* and Maulana Azad. [27]

At the '*Khilafat Conference'* held at *Allahabad* on June 9, 1920 the decision to launch 'Non-cooperation Movement' was taken . [28]

On July 19, 1920*, Shaikhul Hind* issued a *Fatwa* supporting the non-cooperation movement. The movement was formally launched on August 31, 1920. [29]

Later, on October 29, 1920, a detailed edict was issued again and the 'Al-Jamiat' with signatures of 500 Ulama, published it. [30]

---

(26) A historical View on Jamiat Ulama 59.

(27) Jamiat Ulama Kya Hai 2/5-16.

(28) Tahreek-e-Khilafat 155-156.

(29) Aseeran-e-Malta 53.

(30) Jamiat Ulama Kya Hai 2/30.

Armed with *Fatawa,* the leaders and workers of the "Khilafat Committee" and the "Indian National Congress" went into open agitation and started their struggle against imperialism. A special Conference of *Jamiat Ulama-e-Hind* was held in Calcutta on September 6, 1920, under the presidency of Maulana Taj Mahammad Sindhi. Maulana Azad moved the non-cooperation resolution in the conference and the same was passed. The resolution had declared that any kind of cooperation or association with the British Government was *Haraam* (Prohibited by the Shariah) [31]

SHUDHI KARAN MOVEMENT BY HINDU EXTREMISTS

The British government, on 8th August 1921, declared the non-cooperation *Fatwa* of the *Khilafat Committee* as illegal. On 18 September, Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madni, Maulana Muhammad Ali Jawhar, Maulana Shawkat Ali, Maulana Nisar Ahmad Kanpuri, Peer Ghulam Mujaddid and Dr. Saifuddin Lachko were arrested on the charges of illegal publication and the distribution of the *Fatwa*. [32]

In the third conference of *Jamiat* in Lahore, held on Nov. 18-20, 1921 under the presidency of Maulana

---

(31) Jamait Ulama par Tarikhi Tabsara 58.
(32) Shaikhul Islam, A Political Analysis 99.

Abul Kalam Azad, a resolution to **’Boycott Foreign Goods’** was passed. On charges of inciting boycott, 30 thousand people were put into the prison - most of them Ulama and Muslim freedom fighters. On February 5, 1922, Mahatma Gandhi announced the end of boycott due to the *’Chauri Chaura’* incident, where three freedom fighters were killed by the British troops and in retaliation to which the local public killed 23 British police personnel. Since the killing of the British police personnel was in violation of the non-violence policy of the freedom struggle, Mahatama Gandhi called off the non-cooperation and civil disobedience movement. [33]

The call of non-cooperation and civil disobedience was given jointly by Hindu as well as Muslim leaders. The unity of the two communities and the successful response the call of civil disobedience received from the common masses proved an unexpected challenge to the British Government. In order to break this unity, the British government started propagating **’*Shudhi Karan*’**, through their Hindu agents. The *Shudhi Karan* movement resulted in a severe set back for *Jamiat Ulama* and the freedom movement. Since thousands of poor Muslims were lured to Hinduism in the name of *Shudhi Karan*, *Jamiat Ulama* couldn’t cope with its real

---

(33) Tahreek-e-Khilafat 243-244.

mission of freedom struggle. *Jamiat* took the challenge seriously and succeeded in calling back these poor Muslims to their original religion - Islam. [34]

THE DEMAND OF TOTAL FREEDOM

The 4th Conference of *Jamiat*, held in December 1922 under the presidency of Maulana Habeebur Rahman Usmani, adopted a resolution to **'Boycott the Assemblies'**. The fifth conference was held at Cocanada in January 1924 under the presidency of Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madni. In his Presidential address, Maulana Madni raised the demand for complete independence. [35]

At the 7th Conference of *Jamiat* in Calcutta, held on March 11-14, 1926 under the presidency of Maulana Syed Sulaiman Nadwi, a resolution for complete freedom of India was passed for the first time. [36]

In the 8th General Meeting of *Jamiat*, held in Peshawar on December 2-5, 1926 under the presidency of *Allama Anwar Shah Kashmiri*, a resolution to oppose the 'Simon Commission' was passed by full strength. The very sentence of the resolution: "freedom is not given on

---

(34) What Jamiat Ulama Is ?

(35) Muslim Ulama Ka Kirdaar 33.

(36) For resolution details see, What Jamiat Ulama is ? 2/119-121.

platter, you have got to snatch it", sums up the mood of those freedom fighters .[37]

After *Jamiat* had passed the resolution against the Simon Commission, the Indian National Congress realized its importance. In its 'Madras Meeting', held on December 26, 1927, the Congress adopted resolution demanding the British government to recall Simon Commission. Simon returned back to Britain unsuccessful in his mission on March 31, 1928.[38]

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONGRESS AND JAMIAT

Jamiat was a key member in the 'All Party Conference', held at Lucknow in the year 1928. The conference criticized the ***'Nehru Report'*** *that sought autonomy under the British rule. The Congress policy of autonomy under the British rule was against Jamiat's policy of complete freedom. Consequently, Jamiat had to suspend its support to the Congress as long as it did not abandon the 'Motilal Nehru Report.' Finally in its 'Lahore Meeting', held on December 31, 1929, the Indian National Congress voted in favour of Jamiat demand for complete freedom of India after 5 years.*

---

(37) What Jamiat Ulama is 2/145.
(38) Maulana Azad, A Political Diary 213-214.

In relation to Gandhiji's *Dandi March*, in 1929, several leaders of the *Jamiat* including Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Maulana Hifzur Rahman Seoharvi, Maulana Fakhruddin, Maulana Syeed Mohammad Mian and Maulana Bashir Ahmad Bhatia were arrested. At the 9th Conference at *Amroha*, held on May 3-5, 1930 under the presidency of Maulana Moinuddin Ajmeri, a resolution was adopted for an alliance and full cooperation with the Congress. The resolution was moved by Maulana Hifzur Rahman and supported by Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madni and Maulana Ataullah Shah Bukhari.[39]

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT

During the **'Civil Disobedience Movement'** of 1930, the President of *Jamiat*, Mufti Kifayatullah, and the General Secretary, Maulana Ahmad Saeed Dehlavi, were arrested. At the time of the **'Second Civil Disobedience Movement'** in 1932, the *Jamiat* like the Congress appointed an organizational arbitrator. ***'Idara Harabia'*** (a center for struggle) was set up for which the responsibility was entrusted to Maulana Abul Mahasin Sajjad. Mufti Kifayatullah Dehlavi was appointed the first arbitrator of *Jamiat*. He led the

---

(39) Tahreek Azadi-e-Hind Mein Muslim Ulama aur Awam Ka Kirdaar 99.

procession of more than 100,000 strong men on March 11, 1932 and courted arrest at '*Azad Park*' of Delhi. He remained in jail for 18 months. [40]

The second arbitrator, Maulana Husain Ahmad Madni, was arrested while on his way to Delhi from *Deoband*. Thereafter, one after the other arbitrators like Maulana Ahmad Saeed Dehlavi, Maulana Hifzur Rahman Seoharvi, Maulana Syed Mohammad Mian Deobandi, Maulana Habeebur Rahman Ludhianvi and others were arrested. Most of them were put in jail for 1 to 2 years. Approximately 90 thousand people were arrested, half of them were Ulama and Muslims. [41]

THE SEED OF COMMUNALISM IS SOWN

The freedom movement was gaining ground every day. A weakened British Empire, even though they had won the War against powerful Ottoman Empire, was not able to cope with the situation. In the face of resolute and nationwide agitation and civil disobedience of the freedom fighters, the imperialist ruler had no way out but to sow the seed of communalism that would divide the two communities (Hindu & Muslim) whose activists together were standing like a rock against British interests. To implement the nefarious and infamous

---

(40) Al-Jamiat : Special Issue on Mufti-e-Azam 44-45.
(41) Karwan-e-Ahrar 1/106.

’divide & rule’ policy, in 1935, the British government announced assembly election on the basis of proportional representation on religious basis. A Hindu was allowed to vote for a Hindu candidate and Muslim for a Muslim only. [42]

It was, perhaps, this poisonous seed that later grew into strong tree-trunk and began producing bitter fruits in abundance. Hindu and Muslim freedom fighters, who fought together for the liberation of this great country, became suspicious of each other’s motive. This not only resulted in the bloodshed but also became the main cause for the partition of India.

MUSLIM LEAGUE AVAILS OPPORTUNITY

‘Muslim League’ as a political entity came into existence in the year’ 1906. It, however, couldn’t attract public attention before the ‘India Act 1935’ was announced - least to say of garnering public support and respectability in the Muslim eyes. Since the election was to be conducted on communal basis, *Jamiat* leadership was not sure what role it should play in such an idiosyncratic political situation. And for sure it didn’t want to participate in the communal election directly.

---

(42) Tahreek Azadi-e-Hind Mein Muslim Ulama aur Awam Ka Kirdaar 100.

Jamiat decided to put the 'Muslim League' as a front organization with its full backing. This did not go in favour of *Jamiat* because an organization of such a strong mass base seldom brings other organization in the front that could steal the show. Due to lack of understanding and extremist posture adopted by some Muslim League and Congress members, the gulf between the two major political parties went on increasing. The situation turned from bad to worse because both were either ruling or in opposition in the provinces. The communal harmony and amity that existed between the two communities were shattered. Both the parties left no stone unturned to defame each other. As a consequence, the British agent provocateur had the field day. Certain religious discords or sentimental issues were intelligently coloured by the British to turn the schism into hatred.

On the other hand, the two communities took sides with the political parties they had voted for. In such a charged political atmosphere, the call given by *Jamiat Ulama* for communal amity, political unity and struggle for a total freedom fell on deaf ears. Having no way out, the *Jamiat* had to break the alliance with the Muslim League. Thereafter, the *Jamiat* decided against having any truck with the Muslim League. But the League had already achieved as much mass support as required to

impress upon the British government that it was the true representative of the Muslim community.[43]

The British, on the other hand, were regaling over the fruits of their harvest, 'Divide and Rule Policy', that had stupendous success in dividing the two communities. The Congress and the League were like the proverbial saying *"the fighting crows do not sense that their prey is being eaten by the smart fox."*

WORLD WAR II & ULAMA'S OPPOSITION TO THE CONSCRIPTION

Jamiatul Ulama-e-Hind strongly opposed conscription during the World War II (1939-45). They declared complete non-cooperation in the British war efforts. The book '*Ulama-e-Hind ka Shandar Maazi'*, written by Maulana Mohammad Mian, was banned and the author arrested. The Working Committee of *Jamiat* , on July 13-14, 1940, termed the ban and arrest as a tyrannous step. The leaders of *Jamiat* including Maulana Hifzur Rahman Seoharvi, Maulana Ahmad Ali Lahori, Maulana Mohd. Qasim Shahjahanpuri, Maulana Abul Wafa Shajahanpuri, Maulana Shahid Mian Fakhri Allahabadi, Maulana Mohammad Ismail Sambhali, Maulana Syed Akhtarul Islam were arrested for their opposition to conscription and the British war efforts.[44]

---

(43) History of Jamiat Ulama-e-Hind 94.
(44) History of Jamiat Ulama 103.

QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT

At a *Jamiat* conclave, held at *Bachhraon* on April 23-25, 1940, Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madni once again raised the question of India's total independence. As a consequence, he was arrested on 24th June on his way to Punjab to participate in the **'unity conference'**. He was sentenced to six months imprisonment. The imprisonment term was about to finish that he was served another notice on January 4, 1943 under the Defense of India Rules and kept in *Naini* jail until August 22,1944. Thereafter, he was released unconditionally. The Working Committee of *Jamiat*, on 5th August 1942, adopted a resolution calling upon the British to **'Quit India'**. The signatory to the resolution were Mufti Kifayatullah, Maulana Ahmad Sæed, Maulana Hifzur Rahman and Maulana Abdul Haleem Siddiqui. It was after *Jamiat's* resolution that the Bombay Session of the Congress, on August 9, passed the famous 'Quit India' resolution that led to the arrest and incarceration of the Congress and the *Jamiat* leaders.

Jamiat Ulama resolutely opposed the idea of Pakistan. Its leaders, especially Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madni, were victims of Muslim League violence.[45]

---

(45) See the detail in Ulama-e-Haque vol. 2 (in Urdu) or in "Ulama freedom struggle and concept of Pakistan" a new work by MMERC Scholars - Mumbai.

Chapter (iv)

CONCLUSION

The above mentioned facts are but just a glimpse to the vast contributions made by the alumni of Darul Uloom Deoband and sons of Shah Waliullah's spiritual school towards the freedom of this country. Their contributions in political, social and economic fields and in the fields of education, literature, art and culture and; last but not the least, in Islamic theology are like an open book that any unbiased student of history can open the pages and read.

The negative approach adopted by the British historians of the past, and even present day historians to paint Ulama and their struggle against oppressive forces into bad colours is understandable. What is not understandable is the purpose of poisonous writings of the votary of so-called *Hindutva* movement like *Arun Shoorie* and others. We simply cannot believe that these historical facts are hidden from them. Shall we not believe then that the sole purpose of these writings is to scale the ladder of power?

"The Darul-Uloom is of course well known. Started in 1866, it is often referred to as the Al-Azhar of India. From its beginning it was profoundly anti west…" these are not the words of an ignorant writer. The same

intelligent writer, when wears the glasses of biasness, borrows words like ”orthodoxy” and ”fundamentalism” from the imperialist’s lexicon to attack the Ulama of this country who never acted cowardice in the face of even most repressive methods of the British forces. He, perhaps, forgets that the Ulama of this country were not the lot who (when put into prison for few days) gave the undertaking in writing that they won’t hoist the flag of revolt against the British rule in India. Even after knowing the facts, he writes: ”*that (Ulama’s) opposition (to the British) was an aspect of its commitment to orthodoxy.”* An honest observer of India’s freedom struggle may ask why can’t *Mr. Arun Shourie* see in Ulama’s opposition (to the British rule) an aspect of valour and commitment to fight the oppressive forces? The only possible answer is that ‘artificial blindness has no cure!’

Mr. Shourie vents his anger on a government agency that sees *Darul Uloom* in a good stead. While quoting (read distorting) what the government agency had written about Darul Uloom :

”One of the main objects of the Darul Uloom was to provide the Indian Muslims with a direct access to the original sources of Islamic Learning, produce learned men with missionary zeal to work among the Muslim masses to create a truly religious awakening towards

classical Islam, ridding the prevalent one in India of innovation and unorthodox practices, observances and beliefs that have crept into it and to impart instruction in classical religion.

The Darul Uloom has achieved this aim to a great extent, having been undoubtedly the greatest source of orthodox Islam in India, fighting, on the one hand, religious innovation (bid'at) and, on the other, cultural and religious apostasy under Western or local influences. It has succeeded in instilling in its alumni the spirit of classical Islamic ideology, which has been its motto. As a matter of fact, Deoband has established itself as a school of religious thought, a large numbers of religious Madrasahs were founded on its line throughout the country by those who graduated from it, thus bringing classical religious instruction to large sections of the Muslim masses. Some of these schools and colleges have in their right become renowned centres of learning…"

Mr. Shourie criticizes the government agency for what he thinks is a positive comment. Mr. Shourie is a renowned intellectual of the country who having (supposedly) an open mind cannot digest even a token of appreciation that the freedom fighters and alumni of *Darul Uloom* received from the government agency. One could think of the state of those minds that have been continuously feeded wrong information regarding Islam and Muslims. Criticizing the

statement of the agency, Mr. Shourie writes in his book "*The World of Fatwas*":

"That praise for re-establishing orthodoxy in Islam, for purging it of bid' at a condemnatory word heretical "innovation", for purging it of "religious apostasy" which the study says had crept into it "under Western or local influences", that approbation is from a publication of our secular Government!" [46]

If sangh can be the soul of the Head of our secular Government, why not this approbation from a publication of our secular Government Mr. Shourie?

---

(46) The World of Fatwas 6-7.